ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शांतिः शांतिः शांतिः ॥

OM pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate

OM śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

Adaḥ, that [i.e., Brahman in its transcendental aspect; it is 'that' because it is beyond thought and speech]; *pūrṇam,* all-embracing, infinite; *idaṁ,* this [i.e., Brahman in its relative aspect; it is 'this' because it is seen in the phenomenal world]; *pūrṇam,* all-embracing, infinite; *pūrṇāt,* from the transcendental Brahman; *pūrṇam,* Brahman as this phenomenal world; *udacyate,* is derived, projected; *pūrṇasya,* [if] from the transcendental Brahman; *pūrṇam,* the realtive Brahman, the phenomenal world; *ādāya,* is taken away [i.e., is rejected by the knowledge that it is unreal and only a superimpostion]; *pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate,* the infinite and all-embracing Brahman remains infinite, in fact; *OM śāntiḥ,* peace to the individuals; *śāntiḥ,* peace to the planets; *śāntiḥ,* peace to the animals.

INVOCATION

Om That Brahman is infinite. This phenomenal world is also infinite. But "this' is only a projection of "that'. [Nevertheless,] if "this' is taken away, "that' remains infinite as before. Om peace to the individuals, peace to the planets, peace to the animals.

The idea is that the phenomenal world has no independent existence. It exists only because it is supported by Brahman, it is only a superimposition on Brahman. Sometimes if we walk along a road in the dark, we might mistake a rope for a snake. This delusion is possible because of the rope. When this delusion goes, there is no longer a snake. It has merged into the rope. Similarly, when we know Brahman (which is also our Self), the world merges into it.

ĪŚA UPANIṢAD

The word upanisad does not refer to a book. It refers to knowledge. But this knowledge is not ordinary knowledge. It is knowledge of the highest order that knowledge which gives you peace, happiness, and a sense of blessedness. In order to get that knowledge, you must go to a teacher who himself has that knowledge. If you are blind, you would not go to another blind man and ask him to lead you. In the same way, you would not go to a teacher who does not have the knowledge you are seeking. Then you must approach this teacher with great humility. He does not expect any money from you, but he does expect you to be humble and listen to him patiently. And he also expects that you will love and respect the truth he will be teaching you. You must have

great yearning for that truth, and you should approach the teacher after you have gone through the prescribed moral and spiritual disciplines.

The *Īśa Upaniṣad* is so called because it starts with the word isa. *Īśa* means the Lord who is the inmost Self of all. Unlike other *Upaniṣads*, the *Īśa* is all in verse, and many people think it is the oldest and best of the *Upaniṣads*. It is found in the *Sukla Yajur Veda*. Though it forms a part of the *samhita* section, which normally deals with rituals, the *Īśa Upaniṣad* concerns itself only with nondualistic knowledge and has nothing to do with rituals.

As a rule, *Upaniṣads* bristle with disputes about knowledge and ignorance, the real and the unreal, and the one and the many. But the *Īśa Upaniṣad* very succinctly resolves all these disputes. It shows how all that is relative finally dissolves into one Absolute existence. This Absolute is nameless and formless. In common usage, it is referred to as *Brahman* (the biggest), or the *Paramatman* (the Cosmic Self). This *Brahman*, or *Paramatman*, is the essence of our being and underlies all that exists. In names and forms there is diversity, but in spirit there is only one. The nature of this one and our relationship with it is the subject of enquiry of this *Upaniṣad*.

॥ अथ ईशोपनिषद् ॥

MANTRA 1

ॐ ईशावास्यमिदँ सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम्॥ १ ॥

AUM īśāvāsyamidṁ sarvaṁ yatkiñca jagatyāṁ jagat
tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasviddhanam (1)

jagatyāṁ, in this world; *yat kiṁ ca,* whatever; *jagat,* subject to change, perishable; *īśā vāsyam,* covered by the Lord; *tena,* therefore; *tyaktena,* by renunciation; *bhuñjīthāḥ,* nourish [i.e., strengthen the consciousness that the Lord is everywhere and in everything]; *kasya svit dhanam,* anyone's health [i.e., no wealth]; *mā gṛdhaḥ,* do not covet

In this changing world everything is subject to change, yet everything is covered by the Lord. Practise renunciation and be strong in the consciousness of the Self. Do not run after anyone's wealth. [I]

This world and everything in it is constantly changing. But that which sustains it is never changing. It is always the same. That is the Lord. On Him everything rests. It is like a movie projected on a screen. The movie changes but the screen is constant. Similarly, the phenomenal world is projected on the Lord. It is a mere superimpositionlike seeing a snake superimposed on a rope on a dark night. The snake has no independent existence. It exists because of the rope, and it ceases to exist as soon as a light is brought. The snake then dissolves into the rope. In the same way, when you know *Brahman*, the world merges into it and you realize that you and *Brahman* are one and the same. To attain this knowledge is the goal of life. The world then cannot taint you. Your contact with it is merely like that of a piece of sandalwood, which has long been under water and has thereby come to acquire a bad odour. For a while the fragrance of the sandalwood is suppressed and the bad odour prevails. But if the sandalwood is rubbed a little, the bad odour disappears and the natural fragrance of the sandalwood becomes predominant. Similarly, your attachment to the world is temporary.
It cannot be permanent. Think of yourself as *Brahman*, as Pure Consciousness. Think intensely and constantly in this way. The attachment you now have to the world will then go.

But how can you attain the knowledge of *Brahman*? You can attain it by the practice of renunciation. You have to keep reminding yourself that the world, with all its allurements, is not realthat is, it is not real in the sense that it is transitory. Only *Brahman* is real because it is imperishable. You must renounce this world and concentrate on *Brahman*. Gold may be alluring, but it is transitory. You should never run after things that are ephemeral. Never covet someone else's wealth, and never become attached to your own wealth.

To one who knows that this world is transitory, wealth is not wealth and any form of sense pleasure is repugnant. You must be concerned only with $Brahman$ become steeped in $Brahman$. $Brahman$ alone is real and you are that $Brahman$. Nurture this consciousness and become oblivious to everything else.

MANTRA 2

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे॥ २॥

kurvanneveha karmāṇi jijīviṣecchataṁ samāḥ .
evaṁ tvayi nānyatheto'asti na karma lipyate nare (2)

karmāṇi kurvan eva, [a man] doing his work, as prescribed by the scriptures; *iha,* here, in this world; *śataṁ samāḥ,* a hundred years; *jijīviṣet,* may want to live; *evaṁ,* in this way; *tvayi nare,* to you, O man; *karma na lipyate,* the fruits of your work will not attach themselves; *anyathā na asti,* there is no other way

A man may wish to live for a hundred years, performing his duties as prescribed by the scriptures. O man, if you do your duties in this way, then the results of whatever you do will not cling to you. There is no other way. [II]

The earlier mantra was a call to renounce. There is no point in running after the pleasures the world has to offer. These pleasures are momentary. If we run after them we will only land ourselves in trouble, for the pleasures will soon be gone and we will suffer. But not everyone is in a position to renounce. The fact is that most people want to enjoy life, and this mantra addresses itself to such people. It tells them that there is no harm if they want to live a long lifelive for, say, a hundred years. They may live that long, but they must fulfil their desires strictly according to the rules laid down by the scriptures. This will slowly lead to the purification of the mind that is, the hankering for sense pleasures will go, the spirit of discrimination will grow strong, and love for Self-knowledge will develop. When this happens they will no longer be attached to the fruits of what they have been doing all their lives. The end result is that they will be ready for the life of renunciation.

This is the only way for people who cannot immediately renounce. They need not feel lost. They can take time. But sooner or later they have to come to the path of renunciation. Till then they must follow the path as defined here.

MANTRA 3

असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसाऽऽवृताः।
तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥ ३ ॥

asuryā nāma te lokā andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ .
tāṁste pretyābhigacchanti ye ke cātmahano janāḥ (3)

asuryāḥ, sunless, fit for demons; *nāma,* known as such; *andhena,* blind [because devoid of Self-knowledge]; *tamasā,* by darkness; *āvṛtāḥ,* enveloped; *te,* such; *lokāḥ,* worlds, planes of existence; *ye ke ca ātmahanaḥ,* those who are devoid of Self-knowledge and are, therefore, like people who have committed suicide; *te pretyā,* they, after their death; *tān,* those [i.e. those worlds]; *abhigacchanti,* enter, are doomed to be in; *janāḥ,* people

There are worlds known to be sunless and fit for demons. They are enveloped in darkness, such as what the blind [i.e., those devoid of Self-knowledge] experience. Those people who have neglected the attainment of Self-knowledge and have thus committed suicide, as it were, are doomed to enter those worlds after death. [III]

This is a condemnation of people who do not try to attain Self-knowledge. They are, in a real sense, committing suicide, for what can be worse than being a slave to sense enjoyment, completely oblivious of the real purpose of life, which is to be your own master? In order to be your own master you have to realize that you are identical with *Brahman*, the Cosmic Self, that you are Pure Consciousness, ever free, without name and form, and unconditioned. You are not subject to any modification, without beginning and end, beyond thought and speech. You are Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute. When you know this you are free. You no longer swing between birth and death. If you do not try to know who you really are, you are indeed committing suicide. You are inviting the ignominy of a slave's life in this world and a similarly unfortunate fate after death.

MANTRA 4

अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो नैनद्देवा आप्नुवन्पूर्वमर्षत्।
तद्धावतोऽन्यानत्येति तिष्ठत्तस्मिन्नपो मातरिश्वा दधाति ॥ ४ ॥

Anejadekam manaso javīyo nainaddevā āpnuvanpūrvamarṣat .
taddhāvato.anyānatyeti tiṣṭhattasminnapo mātariṣvā dadhāti .(4)

ekam, one, only one [i.e., *Brahman*]; *anejat,* immobile, still; *manaso javīyo,* faster than the mind; *devāḥ,* the gods, or the sense organs like the eyes; *pūrvam arṣat enat,* this, always ahead of others; *na āpnuvan,* cannot overtake; *tat tiṣṭhat,* it is always still, always the same; *dhāvataḥ anyān,* other who move fast; *ati-eti,* leaves behind; *tasmin,* on this; *mātariṣvā,* air, life force, the Lord who dwells in space, *Hiraṇyagarbha* [i.e. the first manifestation of *Brahman*]; *apaḥ dadhāti,* supports water [i.e. supprots everything]

Brahman is one without a second. It never moves, yet it goes faster than the mind. It is always ahead; the sense organs can never catch up with it. It is still, yet it defeats all in a race. By its power, the Lord who dwells in space upholds water and everything else in the phenomenal world. [IV]

Brahman, the Self, is one without a second, complete in itself. It never moves. It is always still, always the same, yet it moves faster than the mind. It is the power that moves everything, and it makes the whole world go the way it does. It gives power to the Lord of the universe, Matarisva (the Lord who dwells in space), who is responsible for the operation of the principle of cause and effect.

There is no way of describing *Brahman*. It is beyond thought and speech. It is everywhere and in everything. It is formless, yet every form is its form; it is nameless, yet every name is its name. It is in fact unique. To emphasize this, the *Upaniṣad* makes contradictory statements. In one breath the *Upaniṣad* says, "*Brahman* is still (*anejat*),' and in the next breath it says, "It goes faster than the mind (*manaso javīyo*).' What does it mean by this?

The answer is: Brahman has two aspects. In one aspect it is without attributes (*nirguṇa*). It is the Absolute. It is Pure Consciousness (*śuddha caitanya*). It is then Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute. It is the Cosmic Self (*Paramātma*).

In another aspect *Brahman* is with attributes (*saguṇa*). It is then in its relative aspect. In this aspect it may have a form, and it may also have many qualities, good and bad, small and big, and so on. There are an infinite variety of such qualities. These, it should be remembered, are mere attributes, mere superimpositions (*adhyāsa*). They cannot affect *Brahman*. They are like masks children wear. The mind itself is inert. It can function only when the Self (i.e. the *Atman*, which is another name of *Brahman*) animates it. It cannot

move faster than the Self, because it is the Self that makes it move, and the Self is everywhere. This also applies to all other organs (called *devas,* because they reveal) of the body. And this applies to all of the elements in nature. It is the power that works behind the cause as well as behind the effect.

Take the case of the air. When it is associated with the Self, air is called the life force, but air by itself cannot sustain life. Air is also called *Matariśvā,* because it 'moves about' (*śvā*) 'in space' (*mātari*). But it becomes active when it is associated with the Cosmic Self. It then becomes Hiranyagarbha (the first manifestation of Brahman as an individual) or Sutratma (the Cosmic Self of all - like the thread passing through a garland). It is in this aspect that *Brahman* controls every phenomenon in nature. 'From fear of it fire burns; from fear of it the sun shines; from fear of it *Indra* and *Vayu*, and *Death*, the fifth, run (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II.iii.3).

Nothing can happen independent of *Brahman*, yet nothing affects it. The whole phenomenal world, including everything in it, is derived from *Brahman*, is sustained by it, and in the end dissolves in it.

Mantra 5

तदेजति तन्नैजति तद्दूरे तद्वन्तिके ।
तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ॥ ५ ॥

tadejati tannaijati taddūre tadvantike .
tadantarasya sarvasya tadu sarvasyāsya bāhyataḥ (5)

Tat ejati; that [I,e., Brahman] moves; *tat na ejati*, that does not move; *tat dūre*, that is far off; *tat u antike*, that is also near; *tat*, that; *asya sarvasya antaḥ*, the inmost being of all ; *tat u*, that again; *asya sarvasya bāhyataḥ*, that constitutes its outside also

That [*Brahman*] moves, and it does not move. It is far off, and it is also nearby. That [*Brahman*] is inside of this, and is also its outside. [V]

This mantra illustrates how futile it is to try to describe *Brahman*, which is without name and form-without anything distinctive that we can say about it. It is nothing and yet it is everything. It is nothing because it is beyond thought and speech. It is everything because it is all-inclusive. Everything exists because of it, and it is the essence of everything. It is one and the same, but it appears diverse in terms of names and forms. These names and forms, however, are mere superimpositions. It is what it is irrespective of everything. It is unchanging and unchangeable, and it is never conditioned by anything. It is both immanent and transcendent.

By itself *Brahman* never moves, it never changes. It is always constant. Sometimes we see the moon moving behind some clouds, but actually the moon does not move. It is the clouds that are moving. In the same way, Brahman, the Self, is always the same. It is never born, and it never dies. Because it is associated with the body, it appears to be subject to birth and death. We wear a new coat and when it gets old and torn we throw it away. This is the relationship the coat has with the body. The same is the relationship the body has with the Self.

Mantra 6

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥ ६ ॥

Yaḥ tu, but he ; *ātmani eva*, in himself; *sarvāṇi bhūtāni anupaśyati,* sees all beings; *sarvabhuteṣu ca*, and in all beings ; *ātmānam [anupaśyati]*, sees himself; *tataḥ*, from that experience ; *na vijugupsate*, cannot hate anyone

He who sees everything in himself and himself in everything never hates anything. [VI]

This is what is called *sama-darśita*, same-sightedness. All beings have a common Self. Essentially we are all one, and we differ only in terms of names and forms. But these names and forms are a superimposition. They are not real and therefore are not part of our being. Names and forms are like a thin veil through which the real being within has to be seen. A boy may try to fool his friends by wearing different masks. First he wears the mask of a tiger and behaves like a tiger. Most of his friends are frightened. The next moment he wears the mask of a monkey and jumps about like a real monkey. This time his friends are amused. This goes on for a while, but finally the boy puts aside his masks and appears as he is. The boys then know that he is one of their own. He had always been the same, but the masks made him look different. We are all one and the same: *Brahman*. Only the names and forms make us look different.

This *mantra* urges us to see that we are all one in essence. From *Brahman* down to a blade of grass there is only one single entity. It is not a matter of parts joined together to make a whole. The Self is homogeneous. If I hurt you, I hurt myself. We can only be happy when we are all happy. We are all one-humans, animals, insects, and plants. The goal of life is to realize this oneness of being. To feel one with all leaves no room for hatred or secrecy. There is only room for love.

Mantra 7

यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥ ७ ॥

yasminsarvāṇi bhūtānyātmaivābhādvijānataḥ .
tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śoka ekatvamanupaśyataḥ (7)

Yasmin, when or where; *ātma eva*, the Self only; *sarvaṇi bhūtani*, all beings; *abhut*, have become; *tatra*, then; *vijānataḥ*, to one who knows this; *ekatvam anupaśyataḥ,* seeing everywhere the same ; *kaḥ mohaḥ*, what attachment; *kaḥ sokaḥ*, what sorrow

When a person knows that he himself has become everything and he knows the oneness of things, how can he hate or love anything? [VII]

The true test of Self-knowledge is that you feel that you are one with all. You are everywhere and in everything. There is no 'two'. There is only 'one', and that one is you yourself. This sense of unity is the highest goal of life. No doubt there is diversity at the empirical level, but it is you yourself who have becope diverse by assuming diverse names and forms. That is not to say that you have changed. You still remain one and the same.

When you have this feeling of oneness, there is no room for feelings of attachment and hatred and sorrow. Dualism-that is, seeing diversity-issues from ignorance. With Self-knowledge, with the knowledge of oneness, this ignorance is totally uprooted.

Mantra 8

स पर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमव्रण-
मस्नाविरं शुद्धमपापविद्धम् ।
कविर्मनीषी परिभूः स्वयम्भु-
र्याथातथ्यतोऽर्थान्
व्यदधाच्छाश्वतीभ्यः समाभ्यः ॥ ८ ॥

sa paryagācchukramakāyamavraṇa-
masnāviraṁ śuddhamapāpaviddham .
kavirmanīṣī paribhūḥ svayambhū-
ryāthātathyato 'arthān-
vyadadhācchāśvatībhyaḥ samābhyaḥ (8)

Saḥ paryagāt, he [i.e., the Cosmic Self] has penetrated everywhere; [*saḥ*] *śukram*, he is white, bright; *akāyam*, without a form; *avraṇam*, whole, sound, without a wound; *asnāviram*, without sinews [i.e., without a physical body]; *śuddham*, pure; *apāpaviddham*, unblemished [i.e., no trace of ignorance]; *kaviḥ*, wise, enlightened; *manīṣī,* all-knowing, complete master of his mind; *paribhūḥ*, supreme, his place is above everyone else's; *svayambhūḥ*, of independent origin, not created, manifested by his own will ; *śaśvatībhyaḥ, samābhyaḥ*, eternally; *arthān*, affairs, fruits of actions ; *yāthātathyataḥ vyadadhāt*, dispensing justice to all according to their due.

He [the Self] is all-pervasive, radiant, without a form, without any defect, immaculate, untainted, all-knowing, the master of his own mind, the best of all, of independent origin, and eternal. He dispenses to each his due. [VIII]

Here the discussion is on how peace can be obtained. As long as there is a sense of dualism, our relations with others are bound to be sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile. The ideal is to have a mind that accepts the whole world as its own-a mind that is as broad as the sky. It should be pure, bright, free, and all-embracing- This is possible when we feel our self to be the Self of all.

Nondualism believes that this is the true nature of the Self. Hit seems otherwise, it is because of some adventitious attribute; it is no part of its being. The Self is purely a witness, not involved in any part of the phenomenal world, yet the phenomenal world goes on only because of the Self. It is like a lamp. A lamp gives light without which nothing, good or bad, can be seen. But the lamp is not affected by whatever way the light is used. The position of the Self vis-a-vis the phenomenal world is like that.

Mantra 9

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायां रताः ॥ ९ ॥

Andhaṁ tamaḥ praviśanti ye'avidyāmupāsate.
tato bhūya iva te tamo ya u vidyāyāṁ ratāḥ (9)

Andhaṁ, blindness implicit in the ignorance of the Self; *tamaḥ,* darkness characterized by 'I' and 'mine', egotism, vanity, etc.; *praviśanti,* enter; *ye,* who; *avidyām upāsate,* mechanically perform sacrifices; *tataḥ bhūya iva,* into deeper; *tamaḥ,* darkness; *ya u,* he; *vidyāyāṁ ratāḥ,* worship gods and goddesses

Those who mechanically perform sacrifices [*avidyā*] go into a darkness that is like being blind. But those who merely worship gods and goddesses [*vidyā*] go into a deeper darkness. [IX]

"Blinding darkness' here implies ignorance. And those who worship gods and goddesses go into a deeper darkness because they seek rewards for their worship. As long as there is the sense of "I' and "mine' within us, there can be no Self-knowledge. When you say "me' and "mine' you automatically identify yourself with your body-mind complex. This shows that you are ignorant of your real Self, which is Pure Consciousness and which is also the Self of all. The sign of an ignorant person is in the way he uses the words "I' and "mine'. He says: "I am so and so. I own this much property,' and so on.

An ignorant person has many desires in his mind, and because of these desires he is born again and again. He has to have a body; otherwise he cannot satisfy his desires. But the more he tries to satisfy them, the more they grip his mind. This goes on endlessly. But it is given to a human being to think, reason, and discriminate. Thus he soon comes to realize that the path he has been following cannot give him peace of mind. He understands that he has to choose another paththe path of renunciation. As long as he does not practise renunciation, he gropes in the dark like a blind man and he suffers.

There are two types of such people who grope in the dark. One type worships avidya (ignorance) that is, they mechanically perform the prescribed sacrifices without any thought as to why they are doing them. No wonder they grope in the dark. They are doomed unless someday the truth dawns on them that to save themselves they must seek Self-knowledge.

Worse, however, is the situation of the other typethose who worship *vidyā*. The word *vidyā* usually means "knowledge', but here it is used to mean "gods and goddesses'. Some people worship gods and goddesses so that they may someday attain the same status. They may get their desire fulfilled, but this will only delay their liberation. That is why the Upanisad says that they will be in deeper darkness.

MANTRA 10

अन्यदेवाहुर्विद्ययाऽन्यदाहुरविद्यया ।
इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचचक्षिरे ॥ १० ॥

Anyadevāhurvidyay 'anyadāhuravidyayā.
iti śuśruma dhīrāṇāṁ ye nastadvicacakṣire (10)

Anyat, different; *evā,* nothing but; *āhuḥ,* say [i.e., scholars say]; *vidyayā,* by worshipping deities; *anyat,* different; *āhuḥ,* say; *avidyayā,* by performing sacrifices [i.e., Agnihotra and other sacrifices]; *naḥ tat vicacakṣire,* they told us; *ye,* those; *iti śuśruma,* this we heard, *dhīrāṇāṁ,* from wise men.

Scholars say that the path of *avidya* [performing *Agnihotra* and other sacrifices] and the path of *vidya* [worshipping gods and goddesses] produce different results. Wise men confirm this. [X]

Vidya and *avidya* both are hindrances to Self-knowledge, but *vidya* is even worse than *avidya*. The word *vidya* is used here in a special sense; here it means worshipping gods and goddesses. By worshipping gods and goddesses you will go after death to the world of gods and goddesses. But will that help you? The time you spend there is wasted, because if you were not there you could have spent that time moving forward towards Self-knowledge, which is your goal. In the world of gods and goddesses you cannot do that, and thus you go deeper and deeper into darkness.

Avidya is *karma* and therefore a hindrance. You perform *avidya* - i.e., you perform Agnihotra and other sacrifices. This is a roundabout way of purifying the mind, and it is also groping in the dark. But it may not have as heavy a toll on your time and energy as the other.

The final advice by *Śaṅkara* is: combine both work and worship. Together they may quicken your pace towards Self-knowledge, because it will lead to *citta śuddhi*, purification of the mind. When this happens your desire for enjoyments will become less and your sense of "I' and "mine' will subside. This is the way to *krama-mukti*, gradual, or progressive, liberation, according to *Śaṅkara*.

MANTRA 11

विद्यां च अविद्यां च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।
अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ ११ ॥

Vidyāṁ ca avidyāṁ ca yastadvedobhayaṁ saha .
avidyayā mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā vidyayā ‘amṛtamaśnute (11)

Yaḥ, he; *vidyāṁ ca avidyāṁ ca, vidyā* and *avidyā* both; *tat ubhayaṁ saha veda,* knows [i.e., practises] both; *avidyayā,* by *avidyayā; mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā,* overcoming death; *vidyayā,* by *vidyā*; *amṛtam aśnute,* attains immortality

He who worships gods and goddesses [*vidyā*] and also performs sacrifices [*avidyā*] attains immortality by sacrifices [*avidyā*] and attains bliss by worshipping gods and goddesses [*vidyā*]. [XI]

The condition in both cases worshipping gods and goddesses and performing sacrifices is that the person should have no motive for personal gain. He should not desire the fruits of his actions, such as going to the heaven of gods and goddesses.

As earlier explained, the word *vidyā* has a special meaning here. It means worship of gods and goddesses. Similarly, *avidyā* also has a special meaning. It is *karma* that is, performing *Agnihotra* and other sacrifices. Such *karmas* are obligatory, but if they are done without any attachment to their fruits, they help purify the mind. Combining *karma* and worship is a path to gradual liberation. *Śaṅkara* approves this for those who are not yet ready to renounce.

But suppose you follow the two paths separately. If you perform *avidyā* you will go to *pitṛ loka* (the world of your ancestors). This is a dark region, because it is far removed from Self-knowledge. In fact, you will have to wait a long time to attain Self-knowledge. But if you worship *vidyā* - that is, gods and goddesses you go into still darker regions, and your attainment of Self-knowledge is even further delayed.

True, you go to *deva loka* (the heaven of gods and goddesses), but you are caught in the pleasures there, and you remain there until the fruits of your worship are fully exhausted. You are then reborn as a human being, and your struggle resumes from where you left off. This is why *vidyā* is considered worse.

But if you combine the two that is, perform the obligatory karmas without any attachment to the fruits and at the same time worship gods and goddesses, again without any desire to go to heaven - then you can get the benefit of both, liberation and bliss. For those who are not yet ready to renounce, this path is recommended.

MANTRA 12

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽसम्भूतिमुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ सम्भूत्यां रताः ॥ १२ ॥

andhaṁ tamaḥ praviśanti ye'asambhūtimupāsate.
tato bhūya iva te tamo ya u sambhūtyāṁ ratāḥ (12)

Ye asambhūtim upāsate, those who worship the unmanifested; *andhaṁ tamaḥ praviśanti,* enter a dark region where they are totally blind; *ye u sambhūtyāṁ ratāḥ,* those who are preoccupied with the manifested; *tataḥ bhūyaḥ iva te tamaḥ,* enter into deeper darkness

Those who worship the unmanifested [the causal state of the world] go into a darkness that is like being blind. But those who worship the manifested [the world we see around us] go into a deeper darkness. [XII]

Asambhūti - unmanifested. *Sambhūti* manifested. Indian philosophy does not believe in creation. It does not agree that something can be created out of nothing. There must be a cause before there can be an effect. The cause may not be seen, but it must have existed at some time. For instance, there is a big banyan tree before you. Where did it come from? It came from a seed lying underground. The seed was lying there unseen, but it was there all the same. It cannot be said that it did not exist. The tree was in the seed, lying unmanifested, and now it has become manifested.

All we see around usthe plants, the vast sky, the mountains, rivers, plains, forests, human beings, animals, etc.all were at one time unmanifested. They were a part of *asambhūti*. *Asambhūti* is the same as *Prakṛti*, nature, and it is a state where all the forces are in harmony with each other. Indian philosophy gives the names *sattva*, *rajas*, and tamas to the three forces. So long as there is harmony among these three forces, there is no manifestation. It is difficult to describe what exists. It is unspecified existence - like an ocean without ripples. It is infinite, unvarying oneness.

But somehow or other, at a certain point the harmony is disturbed. Why it is disturbed, no one knows. It is perhaps in the very nature of things that this disharmony should take place. This is the starting point of sambhuti, manifestation. The one becomes many. The many was in the one, and it then becomes manifest. Its first manifestation is called *Hiraṇyagarbha*, or the "first-born'.

Whether you worship *asambhūti* or *sambhūti*, the result is the same. You are groping in the dark. You may know nothing about *asambhūti*, yet you may worship it anyway. Perhaps you worship it out of fear or from the expectation of getting something you desire. In either case you are blind and helpless, and you are constantly afraid of the unknown.

You are worse off, however, when you worship *sambhūti*, the manifested world. There are things in it that frighten you, and there are also things that tempt you. Either way, the result is not good. You are a helpless slave. To emphasize this, your condition is described as being in greater darkness.

But $Ved\bar{a}nta$ tells you to look inside yourself. Your Self is supreme. So long as you are a slave to anything outside yourself, you can never be happy. $Ved\bar{a}nta$ tells you to be your own master.

MANTRA 13

अन्यदेवाहुः सम्भवादन्यदाहुरसम्भवात् ।
इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचचक्षिरे ॥ १३ ॥

anyadevāhuḥ sambhavādanyadāhurasambhavāt .
iti śuśruma dhīrāṇāṁ ye nastadvicacakṣire (13)

sambhavāt, from *sambhūti* [i.e., from manifested nature, from *Hiraṇyagarbha*]; *anyat eva,* different [i.e., different results]; *āhuḥ,* scholars say; *asambhavāt,* from *asambhūti* [i.e., from unmanifested nature]; *anyat,* different, a different kind of result; *āhuḥ,* this also scholars say; *ye,* those; *naḥ tat vicacakṣire,* they told us; *iti śuśruma,* this we heard; *dhīrāṇāṁ,* from wise men

Scholars say that the worship of *sambhūti* [*Hiraṇyagarbha*] and *asambhūti* [Prakrti] produce different results. Wise men confirm this. [XIII]

Earlier, *Śaṅkara* pointed out the futility of worshipping nature, manifested and unmanifested. By worshipping manifested nature (*Hiraṇyagarbha*) you might at best acquire some extraordinary powers. What nature does is breathtaking. By worshipping her you can perhaps do some of the same things she doesthat's all. But if you worship unmanifested nature, you also become unmanifested. You become one with her. What you worship you become this is the common belief.

MANTRA 14

सम्भूतिं च विनाशं च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।
विनाशेन मृत्युं तीर्त्वा सम्भुत्याऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ १४ ॥

Sambhūtiṁ ca vināśaṁ ca yastadvedobhayaṁ saha .
Vināśena mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā 'sambhutyā 'mṛtamaśnute (14)

Sambhūtiṁ ca vināśaṁ ca, unmanifested nature and manifested nature [i.e., *Hiraṇyagarbha*], *yaḥ tat ubhayaṁ saha veda,* who knows them both; *vināśena,* by worshipping the manifested, *Hiraṇyagarbha*; *mṛtyuṁ,* death, ignorance, moral weakness, etc.; *tīrtvā,* overcoming; *asambhutyā,* worshipping the unmanifested nature; *amṛtam,* immortality; *aśnute,* attains

He who worships the unmanifested [*asambhūti*] and also the manifested [*sambhūti*] attains immortality by the unmanifested [*asambhūti*] and conquers death by the manifested [*sambhūti*]. [XIV]

The first *sambhūti* should actually read *asmbhūti* that is, the unmanifested. The *a* is missing for the sake of the metre. *Vinaśa*, death, is *Hiraṇyagarbha*, who is the first manifestation of *sambhūti*. *Hiraṇyagarbha* is so called because he will someday go into dissolution. That which is manifested may also be unmanifested.

The Ultimate Reality too can be both manifested and unmanifested. We should remember that Reality is one and the same, whether manifested or unmanifested. If we start by worshipping the manifested that is, *sambhūti*, or *Hiraṇyagarbha* - we may attain supernatural powers. Modern science is proof of what man can do. We certainly can overcome many limitations of life. We can even overcome the fear of death. If we worship *Hiraṇyagarbha*, we will be like him. *Hiraṇyagarbha* is subject to death, because everything that comes into being will someday cease to be. This will teach us that death is not the end. It merely means a change of form. When we realize this we will have a sense of immortality, and in this way we conquer death.

We should love to worship the unmanifested also. When we learn to love the unmanifested, we become one with it. The unmanifested is nature, and nature is eternal. Thus, we also become eternal. *Sambhūti* and *asambhūti* both may give us a sense of eternity, but that is relative eternity. Real eternity is possible only through Self-knowledge.

Vidya and *avidya*, *sambhūti* and *asambhūti* all these are within the parameter of ignorance. They may give us a sense of freedom for a while, but no permanent freedom. We are still within the clutches of karma.

MANTRA 15

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृण सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥ १५ ॥

hiraṇmayena pātreṇa satyasyāpihitaṁ mukham
tattvaṁ pūṣannapāvṛṇa satyadharmāya dṛṣṭaye (15)

pūṣann, O Sun, sustainer of the world; *hiraṇmayena pātreṇa,* by the shining disc; *satyasya mukham apihitaṁ,* the face of the Truth is covered; *tvaṁ tat apāvṛṇu,* please remove it; *satyadharmāya dṛṣṭaye,* so that I, a seeker of Truth, may see it.

The face of Truth is hidden by a shining disc. O Sun, the sustainer of life and everything in this world, please remove the disc so that I, a seeker of Truth, may see it. [XV]

The sun is personified here. He sustains everything. He is the source of life, the source of everything. He himself is bright and he also makes everything else bright. His brightness is such that it dazzles our eyes. The *Upaniṣad* says there is Truth behind the sun, and this Truth is no other than *Brahman*. All of us are seeking the Truth, seeking *Brahman*, but we cannot see it because of the dazzling light of the sun. It is as if a bright, golden disc is covering the Truth. We pray to the sun that he may be pleased to remove the disc so that we may see the face of *Brahman* - that is, that we may see the Truth.

All sense objects are thus covered, as if they have a golden disc over them, and that is why we feel drawn towards them. These objects are not real, but they appear to be real, as a rope appears to be a snake in a dark place. When a light is brought we see the rope as it is. Similarly, we need light to see the reality. We need knowledge so that we can distinguish the real from the unreal. The world as we see it is not real; it is not real in the sense that it is constantly changing and is transitory. That which is real never changes. It is always the same, and it is imperishable. *Brahman* alone is real, and the Self, which is the Self of all, is that *Brahman*. Out of ignorance we take transitory things to be permanent and cling to them. Sooner or later, however, those things perish, and then we lament. We make this mistake because these things look so attractive. They appear to be covered with "gold', but it is not real gold. Thus the *Upaniṣad* has this earnest prayer that Truth may reveal itself to us so that we may not be misled by worthless, ephemeral things. The sun is light and light is knowledge. Knowledge is Truth and Truth is Knowledge.

MANTRA 16

पूषन्नेकर्षे यम सूर्य प्राजापत्य
व्यूह रश्मीन् समूह तेजः।
यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि
योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ॥ १६ ॥

pūṣannekarṣe yama sūrya prājāpatya
vyūha raśmīn samūha tejaḥ
yatte rūpaṁ kalyāṇatamaṁ tatte paśyāmi
yo'sāvasau puruṣaḥ so'hamasmi (16)

pūṣan, O *Pūṣan,* O Sun, O Nourisher [of the world]; *ekarṣe,* O *Ekarṣi,* O lone Traveller; *yama,* O *Yama,* O guide [along the path of truth and righteousness]; *sūrya,* O Sun; *prājāpatya,* O *Prājāpatya,* O son of *Prājāpati,* the Lord of all beings; *raśmīn vyūha,* gather your rays; *samūha tejaḥ,* withdraw your ligth; *yat te,* so that your; *kalyāṇatamaṁ rūpaṁ,* most gracious form; *te tat paśyāmi,* I can see; *yaḥ asau asau puruṣaḥ,* that person; *saḥ aham asmi,* I am that

O Nourisher, solitary traveller, and guide! O Sun, son of *Prājāpati*! Please gather your rays, withdraw your light. I want to see your most beautiful form. There is that *puruṣa* within you. I am that *puruṣa* [that person]. [XVI]

The sun is the nourisher of all, and he is a solitary traveller that is, he is self-sufficient. He is also called *Yama* because he controls everything. *Prājāpati* is the Lord of all beings, and the sun is his child. The sun's rays are scattered all over the world. This verse requests him to gather his rays in a little: You are too bright for my eyes. Please dim your light for my sake. You can be most beautiful and gracious. I want to see you so. It is not that I am begging. I know I do not have to, for there is someone presiding over your domain and I feel I am He.

The sun is the symbol of *Brahman*. At first you worship the sun as a deity. You are tremendously impressed by his power and beauty. You begin by asking for a fraction of all he has. Later, however, you discover that you and he are one and the same. This revelation takes place after years of self-restraint, renunciation, and meditation.

MANTRA 17

वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मांतं शरीरम्।
ॐ क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥ १७ ॥

Vāyuranilamamṛtamathedaṁ bhasmāntaṁ śarīram
AUM krato smara kṛtaṁ smara krato smara kṛtaṁ smara (17)

Atha, therefore [i.e. now that my death is at hand]; *vāyuḥ,* my individual life force; *amṛtam nilam,* cosmic life force [i.e. may my individual life force merge with the cosmic life force]; *idaṁ śarīram bhasmāntaṁ,* may this gross body be reduced to ashes [i.e., may fire consume it]; *AUM,* remembering *Brahman; krato,* O mind; *smara,* remember; *kṛtaṁ smara* remember all you have done during the years of your life; *krato smara kṛtaṁ smara,* remember again and again

Now that death is coming, I pray that my life force may merge with the cosmic life force. Let this body be consigned to fire and reduced to ashes. Mind, think of all I have done throughout my life. Think of my deeds again and again. [XVII]

Many thoughts crowd into our minds as we die, and these thoughts reflect the kind of life we have lived. But at that time a special effort should be made to think only of good things. What we think we become. We are the by-product of our thoughts. This is why we tell our minds again and again to think good thoughts. And this is why relatives also hold special prayers at the time of our death.

MANTRA 18

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्
विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।
युयोध्यस्मज्जुहुराणमेनो
भूयिष्ठां ते नमउक्तिं विधेम ॥ १८ ॥

agne naya supathā rāye asmān
viśvāni deva vayunāni vidvān.
yuyodhyasmajjuhurāṇameno
bhūyiṣṭhāṁ te nama-uktiṁ vidhema (18)

agne, O Fire; *rāye,* in order that we may get good results of our actions; *asmān supathā naya,* lead us to all that is good; *deva,* O God; *viśvāni vayunāni vidvān,* you know all that passes through our minds and all that we do; *asmat*, from us, *juhurāṇam enaḥ,* all the bad things we have done; *yuyodhi,* remove; *te,* to you; *bhūyiṣṭhāṁ nama-uktiṁ vidhema*

O Fire, in order that good things may come to us, please lead us along the right path. O God, you know everything we do and think. Please remove all evil from within us. We salute you again and again. [XVIII]

This is a prayer to fire to lead us to *Brahman*. At the time of death the gross body is consumed by fire, but the subtle body remains. The subtle body consists of seventeen parts: the five branches of the life force (*prāṇa*), the five organs of perception (*jñnendriya*), the five organs of action (*karmendriya*), the mind (*manas*), and the intellect (*buddhiḥ*). All of these are material but in a very fine form. The mind retains all the impressions of what we have done and thought.

When we die, our individual self leaves the gross body, but it remains in its subtle body. Depending upon its *karma* (the fruits of action), the soul will then go to either of two *lokas* (worlds): *pitṛ loka* (the world of the ancestors) or *deva loka* (the world of the gods and goddesses). Our *karma* also determines how long our stay in one of these worlds will last. Then the soul is reborn in this world, for its desires are still unfulfilled.

Thus the soul keeps moving back and forth between death and life until it realizes the futility of this exercise and turns to the path of renunciation. It is only renunciation that can pave the way to liberation, and this process culminates when the individual self merges with the Cosmic Self.

॥ इति ईशोपनिषद् ॥

.. iti iishopanishhad.h ..

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शांतिः शांतिः शांतिः ॥

OM pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṇ pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyate .
pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūramevāvaśiṣyate ..

OM ṣāntiḥ śantiḥ śāntiḥ ..

INVOCATION

Om That Brahman is infinite. This phenomenal world is also infinite. But "this' is only a projection of "that'. [Nevertheless,] if "this' is taken away, "that' remains infinite as before. Om peace to the individuals, peace to the planets, peace to the animals.